

On December 20, 2013, the FCC issued a Public Notice announcing the deadlines for filing comments and reply comments in response to the Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) on new accessibility requirements for televisions, set-top boxes, and other devices used to watch video programming, as required by Sections 204 and 205 of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA). The FNPRM, which was released with an accompanying Report and Order on October 31, 2013, seeks comments on additional issues related to implementation of the accessible user interfaces requirements.

FNPRM Comment Deadline: February 18, 2014

FNPRM Reply Comment Deadline: March 20, 2014

The following is a summary of the new accessibility requirements adopted in the Report and Order. The deadline for compliance with these new accessibility requirements is December 20, 2016; three years from December 20, 2013, the date the Report and Order was published in the Federal Register.

Manufacturers of televisions, computers, tablets, smartphones, and other devices used to watch video programming will need to make built-in functions related to video programming and on-screen text menus and visual indicators accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, if achievable. Manufacturers must also enable viewers to access closed captioning and video description via mechanisms that are reasonably comparable to buttons, keys, or icons.

Manufacturers of set-top boxes and cable and satellite television companies that lease or sell set-top boxes must make their on-screen text menus and program guides that are used to display or select video programming accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, if achievable. Accessible set-top boxes or accessibility solutions must be provided upon request and at no additional charge to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Documentation that verifies that the individual is blind or visually impaired may be required in certain circumstances. Set-top boxes must also include access to closed captioning via a mechanism that is reasonably comparable to a button, key, or icon.

Link to the Public Notice:

Word: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-13-2439A1.doc

PDF: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-13-2439A1.pdf

Link to Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking:

Word: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-13-138A1.docx

PDF: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-13-138A1.pdf

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